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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/671,541	09/29/2003	Ted Guidotti	1018798-000183	7503

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EXAMINER	
STEPHENS, JACQUELINE F	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3761	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
10/18/2007	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/671,541

Applicant(s)

TED GUIDOTTI

Examiner

Jacqueline F. Stephens

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 8/20/07.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 21 and 22 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 6 and 10-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4, 5, 7 and 8 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 8/20/07 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed 8/20/07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues there is indirect or direct fluid contact between layers 18a and 18b. Applicant argues fluid communication, as understood by one skilled in the art, and as further explained in Paragraph [0050] of the specification requires fluid communication so that liquid can be transferred between the parts of the absorbent body. In Guidotti et al., there is no suggestion that fluid flows from the storage layer 19 back into the front part 18a or into the rear part 18b. Hence, there is no fluid communication between the rear part 18b and the front part 18a, either directly or indirectly, and they cannot be said to be in fluid communication - in contrast to mere direct or indirect physical contact, as the Examiner appears to have understood to be

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the same as that claimed. However, even with regard to the Applicant's definition of fluid communication, Guidotti would still meet the claim limitation. It is reasonable to assume that liquid would be communication between three absorbent layers as arranged in Guidotti. The examiner agrees there is no direct fluid communication between layers 18b and 18a, hence claims 21 and 22 are allowed.

As to claim 18, Applicant argues Figures 4 and 5 illustrate a difference in the acquisition layer 18. However, Figures 4 and 5 clearly show a difference in thickness in the storage layer 19 as claimed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-3, 6, and 10-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Guidotti et al. USP6123692.

As to claims 1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 16, and 17, Guidotti et al discloses an absorbent article as shown in Figures 1, 3, and 4 having a fluid receiving layer 18b, a fluid storage layer 19, a fluid distribution layer 18a (considered a distribution layer in that it distributes fluid to the underlying storage layer 19), and a fluid barrier layer 11,21. The fluid receiving layer 18b is arranged in at least the crotch area of the article in direct or

indirect fluid communication with the fluid distribution layer 18a. The fluid storage layer 19, fluid receiving layer 18b, and fluid distribution layer 18a each have longitudinal end edges that extend along the longitudinal direction, and transverse end edges that extend along the transverse direction.

The fluid distribution layer 18a is arranged to extend in the crotch portion and in at least a substantial portion of one of the waist portion of the article and is absent in at least a substantial part of the opposite waist portion (Figure 3). The fluid barrier 11,21, is arranged at or in close proximity to the transverse end of the fluid receiving layer 18b located adjacent the crotch portion (Figures 3-5). The fluid barrier 21 extends at least a substantial part of the thickness of the fluid receiving layer 18A (Figures 4 and 5).

As to claims 2, the fluid receiving layer 18b is disposed in the crotch portion and in at least as substantial part of the rear portion (Figures 3-5 and col. 4, lines 9-23).

As to claims 12 and 13, Guidotti discloses the fluid barrier 21 comprises plastic, foam, or nonwoven materials (col. 2, lines 60-63).

As to claims 14 and 15, the claims are directed to a process of making the fluid barrier. "Even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." In re

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Thorpe, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (citations omitted).

MPEP 2113.

As to claims 18-20, and 22, Guidotti et al discloses an absorbent article as shown in Figures 1, 3, and 4 having two waist portions in the form of a front 9 and a rear 8, and between the two waist portions a crotch portion 6. The absorbent article has a longitudinal direction extending from one of the waist portion to the other of the waist portion and a transverse direction that extends perpendicularly to the longitudinal direction.

The article comprises an absorbent core including at least one fluid storage layer 19, at least one fluid distribution layer 18a (considered a distribution layer in that it distributes fluid to the underlying storage layer 19) overlapping and being in fluid contact with the fluid storage layer (Figures 3-5). The article comprises a fluid receiving layer 18b arranged in at least the crotch area of the article in direct or indirect fluid contact with the fluid distribution layer 18a and the fluid storage layer 19 as discussed in the Response to Arguments above. The fluid storage layer 19, fluid receiving layer 18b, and fluid distribution layer 18a each have longitudinal end edges that extend along the longitudinal direction, and transverse end edges that extend along the transverse direction. The article further comprises at least one fluid barrier layer 11,21 arranged to extend in the transverse direction of the absorbent article.

The fluid distribution layer 18a is arranged to extend in the crotch portion and in at least a substantial portion of one of the waist portion of the article and is absent in at

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least a substantial part of the opposite waist portion (Figure 3). The absorbent core has a thickness in the opposite waist portion that is less than a thickness in the crotch portion and the one waist portion (see Figures 4 and 5). The fluid barrier 11,21, is arranged at or in close proximity to one of the transverse end edges of the fluid receiving layer 18b located adjacent the crotch portion (Figures 3-5). The fluid barrier 21 extends at least a substantial part of the thickness of the fluid receiving layer 18A (Figures 4 and 5).

The limitation of promoting fluid flow from one area to another is directed to an intended. Intended use must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim limitations.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 4, 5, 7, and 8 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.


6. Claims 21 and 22 are allowed.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jacqueline F. Stephens whose telephone number is (571) 272-4937. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tanya Zalukaeva can be reached on (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


Jacqueline F Stephens
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3761

September 30, 2007